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Berik language

Berik is a Papuan language spoken in eastern Papua. Speakers are located in four village groups on the Tor River towards the northern coast of Indonesian-controlled Irian Jaya.[3]

US linguist John McWhorter cited Berik as an example of a language which puts concepts "together in ways more fascinatingly different from English than most of us are aware".[4] Illustrating this, in the phrase *Kitobana* (meaning "[he] gives three large objects to a male in the sunlight"), affixes indicating time of day, object number, object size, and gender of recipient are added to the verb.[4][5][6]

Berik	
Native to	Indonesia
Region	Tor Atas district, Sarmi Regency
Native speakers	(1,200 cited 1994)[1]
Language family	Foja Range (Tor–Kwerba) ▪ Orya–Tor ▪ Tor ▪ Berik–Bonerif ▪ **Berik**
Writing system	Latin
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	`bkl`
Glottolog	`beri1254 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/beri1254)`[2]

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Locations

In Tor Atas District, Berik is spoken in Beu, Bora Bora, Dangken, Doronta, Kondirjan, Safrontani, Sewan, Somanente, Taminambor, Tenwer, Togonfo, and Waf villages.[7]

Phonology

Consonants

	Bilabial		Labiodental	Alveolar		Alveolo-palatal	palatal	Velar	
Plosive and affricate	**p** [p]	**b** [b]		**t** [t]	**d** [d]	**j** [d͡ʒ]		**k** [k]	**g** [g]
Fricative			**f** [f]	**s** [s]					
Nasal	**m** [m]			**n** [n]				**ng** [ŋ]	
Approximant				**l** [l]			**y** [j]	**w** [w]	
Tap				**r** [ɾ]					

Vowels

Berik has the common six vowel system (/a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, and /u/ plus /ə/).[8]

Sample

- *Angtane ʻ bosna Usafe je gatas tarnap ge nuin. Tesa ga belim taban, ga jes talebowel.*
- "There was once a person named Usafe who lived near the sago acreages. Whenever he finished cutting down a sago tree, he pounded it"[9]

Notes

1. Berik (https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/bkl/) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Berik" (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/beri1254). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. Matthews, "Berik Literacy Program", p. 109
4. McWhorter, "No Tears for Dead Tongues"
5. "Difficult languages--Tongue twisters--In search of the world's hardest language"[1] (http://www.economist.com/node/15108609), Economist, New York,Dec 17th 2009.
6. John McWhorter,"No Tears For Dead Tongues"[2] (https://www.forbes.com/2008/02/21/language-death-english-tech-cx_jm_language_sp08_0221death.html), Forbes,2/21/2008 @ 6:00PM.
7. Eberhard, David M.; Simons, Gary F.; Fennig, Charles D., eds. (2019). "Indonesia languages" (https://www.ethnologue.com/country/ID/languages). *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* (22nd ed.). Dallas: SIL International.
8. Westrum, "A Grammatical Sketch of Berik," p. 137
9. Taken from Jones, "In Pursuit of Discourse Particles", p. 130

References

- Jones, Linda K. (1992), "In Pursuit of Discourse Particles", in Hwang, Shin Ja J.; Merrifield, William R. (eds.), *Language in context: Essays for Robert E. Longacre* (https://web.archive.org/web/20121016144515/http://www.sil.org/acpub/repository/31853.pdf) (PDF), Summer Institute of Linguistics and the University of Texas at Arlington Publications in Linguistics, 107, Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics and the University of Texas at Arlington, pp. 127–36, archived from the original (http://www.sil.org/acpub/repository/31853.pdf) (PDF) on 2012-10-16
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